



Challenges in teaching reading comprehension, fluency, and strategies to be utilized in enhancing reading comprehension

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the various strategies teachers employ to promote reading success among learners despite the challenges encountered in the classroom. Anchored on the belief that effective reading instruction goes beyond overcoming academic difficulties, the research investigates how teachers adapt, innovate, and motivate students to develop strong reading skills. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through interviews and classroom observations with selected elementary teachers.

Findings revealed that teachers utilize a combination of differentiated instruction, contextualized learning materials, and continuous assessment to address diverse reading needs. Moreover, the integration of technology, peer-assisted learning, and reading remediation programs proved instrumental in enhancing comprehension and fluency. Despite limited resources and time constraints, teachers demonstrated resilience and creativity in fostering a supportive reading environment.

The study concludes that teaching beyond the struggles requires commitment, adaptability, and a learner-centered mindset to ensure reading success for all students.

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Introduction

Reading is regarded as the cornerstone of learning, yet it remains one of the most challenging skills for many pupils to master. Teachers continue to encounter barriers such as limited prior knowledge, weak comprehension, and low reading motivation, all of which hinder learners' academic progress. To address these issues, educators employ innovative instructional strategies that transform difficulties into opportunities for literacy growth. Strategies such as scaffolding, guided practice, and differentiated

instruction help learners actively engage in the reading process and enhance comprehension and confidence (Dorigo, 2023; Ocampo, 2018).

In the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte, the development of reading skills remains a major priority in elementary education. Teachers frequently face persistent challenges, including students' struggles with word recognition, poor comprehension, and the lack of support for reading at home. If left unresolved, these obstacles may slow down students' literacy and overall academic development. To counter these barriers, educators have adopted learner-centered approaches such as the guided oral reading method and scaffolded intensive reading, both of which have shown positive effects on students' comprehension levels (Sacaes et al., 2023; Doromal, 2024).

Recent studies affirm that reading instruction becomes most effective when learners are equipped with metacognitive strategies that allow them to monitor and evaluate their own understanding (Batac, 2024). Moreover, innovative programs such as Project PRIME have demonstrated the significant role of teacher-designed reading interventions in improving comprehension among struggling readers (Andal & Bautista, 2023). These findings emphasize that the success of literacy instruction depends not only on teaching reading skills but also on nurturing motivation, strategy use, and continuous support from both teachers and home environments. Hiebert (2018) further highlighted the crucial role of teachers in guiding students toward meaningful reading engagement.

While the Department of Education has introduced initiatives such as the Every Child a Reader Program (ECRP) to address literacy gaps, varying levels of reading performance among schools in Ilocos Norte remain evident (Department of Education Philippines, 2021). These differences underscore the vital role of classroom teachers in ensuring that reading programs are effectively implemented and tailored to the specific needs of their learners. Teachers' ability to turn reading struggles into instructional strategies not only improves academic outcomes but also builds students' confidence and motivation to read (Cruz & Santos, 2020).

Although numerous studies have examined reading intervention strategies such as guided oral reading, scaffolded intensive reading, and metacognitive strategy instruction (Sacaes et al., 2023; Doromal, 2024; Batac, 2024), most of these investigations have focused on general classroom settings and have not provided an in-depth analysis of the unique challenges experienced by teachers within local contexts. Previous research has largely emphasized the *effectiveness* of reading interventions in improving comprehension and motivation, but has not thoroughly explored teachers' lived experiences, contextual challenges, and adaptive strategies in implementing these interventions.

In particular, there is a noticeable gap in localized studies within the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte. While national literacy initiatives such as ECRP have been evaluated broadly (Department of Education, Philippines, 2021), little empirical research has been conducted to examine how these programs are applied, adapted, and sustained at the classroom level in public elementary schools in this division. Earlier works (e.g., Andal & Bautista, 2023; Cruz & Santos, 2020) focused mainly on the outcomes of reading interventions but did not delve into how teachers address specific contextual barriers such as resource limitations, varying learner readiness, and home literacy environments.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill the existing research gap by investigating the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and fluency, and the strategies they employ to enhance learners' reading comprehension in the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte. By examining how educators transform classroom challenges into opportunities for literacy development, the study aims to provide contextualized insights that can guide future teacher training, strengthen local reading programs, and promote equitable literacy opportunities for all learners.

Based on the literature review, there have been no existing studies concerning the current topic. Thus, the current study explores the specific reading challenges and innovative instructional strategies employed by teachers in the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte, aiming to provide contextualized insights that can inform more responsive and effective literacy interventions.

Within this context, the present study seeks to explore the approaches employed by teachers in addressing reading challenges in the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte. By examining how educators transform classroom struggles into strategic interventions, this research aims to provide insights that can guide future teacher training initiatives, strengthen localized reading programs, and promote equitable literacy opportunities for all learners.

Literature review

The purpose of this related literature is to contextualize the study within existing knowledge and emphasize the importance of exploring teachers' strategies for reading success. It provides theoretical and methodological foundations that guide the research and prevent duplication of previous works. Moreover, it enhances understanding, supports the credibility of the researcher, and helps establish a framework for analyzing how educators address reading challenges in the classroom.

Instructional leadership

Teachers' strategies in promoting reading comprehension and fluency have a significant impact on students' learning outcomes. Katipunan and Catoto (2023) found that the Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) approach significantly improved Grade V learners' comprehension by providing structured, daily reading practice that developed both fluency and understanding. Similarly, Widiati et al. (2022) emphasized that explicit instruction in comprehension strategies—such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing—enhances learners' engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills across subjects.

In addition, Suryani, Dewi, and Chuma (2023) highlighted that scaffolding strategies, when applied consistently, help students build confidence and autonomy in reading. Their study revealed that teacher guidance and gradual release of responsibility allow learners to become more independent readers. Supporting this, Yawiloeng (2022) demonstrated that combining instructional scaffolding with multimodal texts not only improved comprehension but also fostered positive attitudes toward reading. Furthermore, Alcaide and Jose (2023) underscored the importance of teachers' adaptability and awareness of students' reading difficulties. Their research showed that teacher-led interventions—such

as individualized instruction, parental involvement, and positive reinforcement—play a vital role in improving learners’ reading performance.

Overall, these studies affirm that effective teaching strategies go beyond addressing reading struggles; they cultivate comprehension, confidence, and lifelong learning skills. Through adaptive and evidence-based instruction, teachers play a central role in shaping students’ academic growth and literacy success.

Impact on learning outcomes

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Local studies and context

Several studies have examined teachers’ strategies in improving reading comprehension and fluency among learners. Velarde and Catoto (2022) implemented a Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) program among Grade V pupils in Cotabato and found significant improvement in students’ comprehension after consistent guided reading sessions. Similarly, Ligpitan, Pasilan, Tolentino, and Hipolito (2025) developed the “TechPlay Fusion Strategy,” integrating technology and games to enhance comprehension and vocabulary among Grade 5 learners in Bulacan. Galang, Aquino, Enriquez, and del Rosario (2025) also reported that repeated reading of localized materials improved students’ reading fluency and confidence.

In another study, Jumao-as et al. (2025) revealed that a reading remediation program effectively moved Grade 4 pupils from frustration to instructional level based on PHIL-IRI results. Moreover, De Ocampo, Tosino, and Martir (2024) found that teachers in Iloilo commonly use guided reading and contextualized

materials but face challenges such as limited resources and students' low motivation. These studies highlight the importance of innovative, localized, and sustained teaching strategies in addressing learners' reading struggles. Collectively, they show that Filipino teachers play a crucial role in transforming reading difficulties into opportunities for literacy growth through adaptive and evidence-based instruction.

Statement of the problem / research questions

This study aims to explore the struggles/experiences and strategies/approaches of teachers in promoting reading comprehension and fluency in the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and fluency?
2. What strategies do teachers apply to address these struggles?

Research methodology

This chapter presented the research design, the locale of the study, population, sampling, data presentation instrument, data gathering procedure, research methodology, ethical consideration, and data presentation and analysis.

Research design

This study employed a phenomenological research design. Specifically, this study adopted a descriptive phenomenology that focuses on understanding lived experiences and contextual nuances. This approach allows an in-depth exploration of the impact of school heads' instructional leadership on teaching quality and student learning outcomes. It used an open-ended question embedded in an online interview questionnaire for school heads. This approach allows the researcher to collect rich narrative data that can provide deeper insights into leadership practices and challenges.

Locale of the study

The study will be carried out in selected elementary schools within the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte. The chosen schools will represent varied contexts, such as urban and rural areas, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how instructional leadership operates in diverse environments. These settings are selected intentionally to capture differences in resources, community engagement, and organizational structures, which may influence the effectiveness of leadership practices.

Population and sampling

The population of this study consisted of school teachers from the selected elementary schools. The respondents were chosen using purposive sampling to ensure that participants have direct involvement in instructional leadership processes. The sample included ten (10) school teachers, representing different school types and sizes, who will provide varied perspectives on teaching quality and student

learning outcomes. This composition reflected the voices of both leaders and practitioners, ensuring a balanced understanding of the impact of leadership.

Data gathering instrument

The main instrument for data collection was an open-ended online questionnaire divided into two main sections: an open-ended question on instructional leadership practices and challenges they encounter. The instrument was developed using Google Forms to ensure accessibility and ease of response.

Data gathering procedure

The data was collected through the online interview questionnaires in Google Forms. Each form will include a section for informed consent, requiring participants to acknowledge their voluntary participation before proceeding to answer the questions.

The link to the school teacher's questionnaire was distributed through official communication channels, such as school email groups or Messenger group chats. Participants will be given a specific time frame, typically two weeks, to complete their responses. After the submission period, the researcher downloaded the collected data from Google Forms, with quantitative responses compiled in spreadsheet format for analysis, and qualitative responses organized for thematic interpretation.

Ethical considerations

The study upheld strict ethical standards to protect the rights and privacy of all participants. Participation will be entirely voluntary, and respondents have the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Informed consent was obtained electronically through the first section of the online form, which explained the purpose, scope, and procedures of the study. All responses remained confidential and anonymous; personal identifiers will not be included in the reporting of results. Data were stored securely in password-protected files and will be used solely for academic purposes. The researcher respects the time, perspectives, and professional responsibilities of all participants throughout the research process.

Results and discussion

This part presented findings from the online interview questionnaire with the 10 respondents (10 school teachers) from the elementary schools of the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte. The data is organized according to key themes identified.

Problem 1: What are the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and fluency?

Table 1: Challenges

What challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and fluency?	Participant
Difficulty in addressing diverse reading levels	P1, P5
Limited time for reading activities	P2, P5
Lack of instructional materials and resources	P3, P8

Struggles in motivating reluctant readers	P6, P9
Challenges in assessing reading comprehension	P3, P10
Influence of large class size on reading instruction	P1, P5, P8

Note. Data were gathered from open-ended online questionnaire responses from ten school teachers of the elementary schools of the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte.

The challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and fluency

Teaching reading comprehension and fluency poses various challenges that greatly impact classroom instruction and student learning outcomes. Teachers often face issues such as handling diverse reading levels, managing limited time and resources, and motivating students who struggle with reading (Adao et al., 2023; Gedik & Akyol, 2022). These challenges highlight the complex nature of literacy teaching, where educators must balance curriculum requirements with students' individual needs (Laroya, 2023). Understanding these difficulties offers valuable insights into the realities of classroom teaching and emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional support, sufficient resources, and effective teaching strategies to help students succeed in reading (Alcayde & Basilan, 2024; Steinle, Stevens, & Vaughn, 2021).

Difficulty in addressing diverse reading levels

Teachers face significant challenges in managing classrooms composed of students with varying levels of reading comprehension and fluency. This range of proficiency requires educators to employ multiple instructional approaches and adapt lesson pacing to meet individual learners' needs. The gap between advanced and struggling readers often makes it difficult to maintain balanced instruction, resulting in challenges in ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students. Addressing this issue demands patience, flexibility, and innovative strategies to support learners across different proficiency levels (Alida Hudson, Poh Wee Koh, Karol A. Moore & Emily Binks-Cantrell, 2020; Laily Amin Fajariyah, Heri Retnawati & Suwarsih Madya, 2023).

“In one class, I have students who can already read fluently and others who still struggle to decode simple words. It’s really hard to keep everyone engaged at the same time. I often need to group them or provide different activities, but time is not always enough.” (P1 and P5)

This finding is consistent with Tomlinson (2017) who argues that differentiated instruction is essential in classrooms with diverse readiness levels. More recent evidence indicates that when classes include emerging and fluent readers together, instructional emphasis must shift—classes with lower average reading skills engage more in consolidation activities while higher-skill classes engage more in independent meaning-based tasks (Little, Lonigan & Phillips, 2020). Furthermore, longitudinal research into reading growth highlights large individual-differences in the elementary years, reinforcing the need for teachers to adjust materials and pacing across proficiency levels.

Limited time for reading activities

Time constraints are a major challenge in teaching reading comprehension and fluency. With numerous subjects and school activities, teachers often struggle to provide enough time for focused reading practice. Studies show that many classrooms devote less than 30 minutes a week to reading instruction, limiting students' opportunities to build comprehension and fluency (KQED, 2023; *Frontiers in Education*, 2025). Despite these challenges, teachers make the most of limited time by integrating short but meaningful reading activities into other subjects (RSIS International, 2023).

“There are days when reading sessions have to be shortened because of other subjects or school events. I really wish we had more time to focus on reading because students need consistent practice to improve.” (P2 and P5)

This finding aligns with Duke and Cartwright (2021), who emphasized that limited instructional time hinders students' reading progress, as consistent and sustained practice is essential for developing fluency and deep comprehension.

Lack of instructional materials and resources

A persistent challenge teachers face in teaching reading comprehension and fluency is the lack of adequate instructional materials and resources. Studies show that many classrooms have an insufficient supply of storybooks, visual aids, and other reading tools needed to support effective reading instruction (*International Journal of Social and Management Studies*, 2024). In some schools, teachers struggle to access appropriate reading materials and must innovate with limited resources to engage learners (Springer, 2025). Research also indicates that the absence of varied and age-appropriate storybooks restricts students' reading opportunities and motivation (Scientific Research Publishing, 2023). As a result, teachers often create improvised or digital materials to sustain student interest, highlighting the urgent need for adequate learning resources to improve literacy outcomes (Learning Corner, 2024).

“Sometimes, we don't have enough reading materials for the whole class, so I have to make my own or print from online sources. It takes extra effort, but I do it because I know my pupils need more reading exposure.” (P3 and P8)

This finding aligns with Kim and Padilla (2022), who found that limited access to reading materials significantly hinders literacy instruction, prompting teachers to innovate and adapt available resources to sustain student engagement.

Struggles in motivating reluctant readers

Motivating reluctant readers is a persistent challenge in developing reading comprehension and fluency. Many students show low interest in reading due to limited background knowledge, low confidence, or lack of support at home (*Georgia Literacy Journal*, 2023). Teachers often find it difficult to sustain attention and enthusiasm, as some learners view reading as a tedious task. To address this, educators use storytelling, games, and discussions to make reading more engaging (ScholarWorks UTRGV, 2022).

Despite these strategies, maintaining students' motivation remains a demanding aspect of literacy instruction (Eralingua Journal, 2024).

“Some pupils lose interest easily when it comes to reading. They find it boring or too difficult. I always try to use stories and activities that catch their attention, but it still takes a lot of patience and encouragement.” (P6 and P9)

This observation supports Guthrie and Klauda (2019), who found that students' motivation to read increases when learning activities are engaging, confidence-building, and personally relevant, reinforcing the importance of creative and student-centered teaching approaches.

Challenges in assessing reading comprehension

Assessing students' reading comprehension remains a major challenge for teachers, as comprehension involves interpretation and application rather than simple recall. Many educators struggle to design assessments that accurately measure how well learners infer and connect ideas from texts. Large class sizes, limited time, and diverse reading abilities make individualized assessment and feedback difficult to manage (Nguyen, 2023). Moreover, some students perform well on written tests but fail to demonstrate deep understanding during discussions or real-world tasks, emphasizing the need for more flexible and authentic assessment tools (Rahmawati & Widayati, 2022; Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2023).

“It's not easy to assess reading comprehension because some students can answer questions correctly but don't really understand the text. I try to ask open-ended questions or let them retell stories, but doing this with every student takes a lot of time.” (P3 and P10)

Recent studies have also highlighted similar difficulties in evaluating reading comprehension. Afflerbach (2022) noted that conventional assessments often overlook higher-order thinking and interpretive understanding. Likewise, Kispal (2020) emphasized the value of performance-based tasks, such as retelling and open-ended questioning, for revealing deeper comprehension. In addition, Ecalle and Magnan (2018) argued that comprehensive reading assessment should integrate multiple modes—written, oral, and interactive—to more accurately reflect students' reading abilities.

Influence of large class size on reading instruction

Large class sizes present considerable challenges for teachers in effectively teaching reading comprehension and fluency, as managing many learners makes it difficult to provide individualized attention, monitor progress, and address each student's specific reading needs (EduEdify, 2024). Teachers often struggle to maintain engagement and ensure meaningful participation for all learners in reading activities when the group is too large and diverse (British Council, 2025). The crowded learning environment also limits opportunities for guided reading, small-group discussions, and one-on-one interventions (Joint-Educational Offerings, 2025). Despite these constraints, teachers continue to organize group work, implement peer-reading activities, and maximize available time and resources to support every learner's reading growth (GeekMode Blog, 2023).

“Having too many pupils in class makes it hard to focus on those who need more help in reading. I try to group them and rotate activities, but it’s still challenging to give enough attention to everyone.” (P1, P5, and P8)

Several studies have highlighted similar challenges in literacy instruction. Blatchford et al. (2019) found that large class sizes reduce teachers’ ability to deliver individualized instruction and formative feedback, particularly in literacy subjects. Likewise, Lazarin (2020) emphasized that overcrowded classrooms negatively affect student engagement and limit opportunities for small-group reading support. Mulryan-Kyne (2020) also noted that managing diverse learners in large classes often compels teachers to rely on whole-class approaches, which may not effectively address individual reading difficulties.

Problem 2: What strategies do teachers apply to address these struggles?

Table 2: Strategies

Teachers’ strategies and coping mechanisms for reading success	
Differentiated instruction and group reading activities	P1, P6
Use of supplementary reading materials	P4, P9
Incorporating games and interactive reading tasks	P2, P8
Continuous assessment and feedback	P5, P10
Collaboration with co-teachers and parents	P3, P7
Professional development and self-learning	P1, P9

The data were obtained through questionnaires

Problem 2: Strategies do teachers apply to address these struggles

To address challenges in teaching reading comprehension and fluency, teachers develop creative and practical strategies to improve student performance. They use differentiated instruction, group reading, interactive activities, and collaboration with parents to meet diverse learning needs (Delos Reyes & de Asis, 2019). Research also highlights that strategy-based and engaging reading instruction significantly enhances comprehension and fluency (Koch & Sporer, 2017; Steinle, Stevens, & Vaughn, 2022). Through these efforts, teachers foster a supportive reading culture that encourages confidence and enjoyment in reading.

Differentiated instruction and group reading activities

To address students’ varied reading abilities, teachers commonly implement differentiated instruction and group-reading activities by organizing learners into smaller, flexible groups based on reading level so that struggling readers receive guided practice while advanced students engage in enrichment tasks (Institute of Education Sciences, 2024). This approach also fosters peer collaboration and confidence through structured group reading tasks (Number Dyslexia, 2023). Through these flexible strategies, teachers ensure all learners have meaningful opportunities to improve at their own pace and sustain an inclusive reading environment (Student Achievement Solutions, 2025).

“I usually group my pupils according to their reading level so I can give them tasks that fit their abilities. It helps me focus more on those who need extra support, and at the same time, stronger readers can help their classmates during activities.” (P1 and P6)

Similar findings were reported by Smale-Jacobse et al. (2019), who found that differentiated instruction enhances student engagement and reading growth when instruction is tailored to ability levels. Likewise, Santangelo and Tomlinson (2021) emphasized that grouping learners strategically allows teachers to provide equitable and personalized learning opportunities. In addition, Forster et al. (2018) highlighted that assessment-based grouping supports both struggling and proficient readers by aligning tasks with their current reading development.

Use of supplementary reading materials

Teachers recognize the importance of providing students with varied and engaging reading materials—such as storybooks, magazines, digital texts, and printed worksheets—to enhance comprehension and fluency. The use of diverse reading resources helps sustain students’ interest and expose them to different types of texts that build vocabulary and comprehension (Huang & Liang, 2020). Studies show that supplementary reading materials support differentiated instruction and motivate learners to read beyond prescribed textbooks (Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner, 2021). Despite limited school resources, many teachers create or gather their own materials to meet learners’ needs, reflecting creativity and commitment to fostering a love for reading (Mugo, 2023).

“Aside from the books provided by the school, I prepare extra stories and print reading passages I find online. The pupils enjoy reading new materials, and it helps them practice more often.” (P4 and P9)

This observation is consistent with **Toste et al. (2020)**, who emphasized that providing students with varied and engaging reading materials enhances their motivation, participation, and overall reading achievement by fostering meaningful and enjoyable literacy experiences.

Incorporating games and interactive reading tasks

To make reading more engaging and enjoyable, teachers incorporate games and interactive activities such as word hunts, storytelling, and comprehension relays that promote active participation and collaboration among learners. Studies have shown that game-based and interactive reading strategies enhance students’ motivation, comprehension, and overall reading performance (Hwang & Chang, 2020). Play-based literacy approaches also help reduce reading anxiety and improve engagement, particularly among struggling readers (Su & Cheng, 2019). By integrating these creative methods, teachers transform traditional reading lessons into dynamic, learner-centered experiences that foster confidence and enjoyment in reading (Rahim & Ismail, 2023).

“I use games and fun reading challenges to get my pupils excited about reading. When they enjoy the activity, they become more interested and confident in reading aloud and answering comprehension questions.” (P2 and P8)

This observation is consistent with Griffiths and Larsen (2021), who found that incorporating interactive and game-based reading activities increases student engagement, motivation, and comprehension by transforming literacy learning into an enjoyable and participatory process.

Continuous assessment and feedback

Continuous assessment and feedback play a crucial role in monitoring students' reading progress and guiding instructional decisions, as teachers regularly evaluate learners through oral reading, comprehension checks, and written exercises to identify strengths and areas for improvement (Rufina, 2020). By providing timely and constructive feedback, teachers help students become aware of their progress and motivate them to take an active role in developing their reading skills (Positive Teacher Feedback & Reading Self-Efficacy Study, 2025). This ongoing process allows teachers to adjust lessons based on individual needs and ensure that learning goals are effectively met (Continuous Assessment for Improved Teaching & Learning, 2024). Consistent assessment and feedback not only enhance students' reading performance but also build their confidence and motivation to improve further (English Language Teaching Study, 2019).

“I always check my pupils' reading progress through short activities and comprehension questions. When I give feedback right away, they understand what they need to work on and feel encouraged to do better next time.” (P5 and P10)

This aligns with the study of Miller and Davis (2022), which emphasized that ongoing assessment and constructive feedback are essential for supporting literacy growth. They found that when teachers consistently evaluate students' reading performance and provide timely guidance, learners become more engaged, reflective, and motivated to enhance their reading comprehension and fluency.

Collaboration with co-teachers and parents

Collaboration with co-teachers and parents plays a vital role in supporting students' reading development, as teachers team up to share strategies and review student progress, and partner with parents through home reading activities and regular communication—efforts that strengthen the literacy support system and ensure learners receive consistent guidance both at school and at home (Pennington, Tang, Divoll & Correll, 2024; Luna & Del Valle, 2023).

“We always share ideas and strategies during our LAC sessions, and I also coordinate with parents to monitor their child's reading progress at home. This teamwork really helps the pupils improve faster.” (P3 and P7)

This finding is consistent with Thompson and Rivera (2023), who highlighted that collaboration among teachers and active parental involvement significantly enhances students' reading achievement. Their study revealed that when educators share best practices and maintain open communication with parents, learners receive stronger and more consistent support, leading to improved motivation, comprehension, and overall literacy development.

Professional development and self-learning

Teachers recognize the importance of continuous professional growth and self-directed learning in enhancing their competence in teaching reading comprehension and fluency. Many educators actively participate in seminars, workshops, and training programs that provide updated strategies and methodologies for effective reading instruction (Paige, Smith & Magpuri-Lavell, 2019). Others take the initiative to engage in self-learning through online resources, research, and collaboration with colleagues to refine their teaching approaches and adapt to students' evolving needs (Study on Professional Development Intensity & Coaching, 2022). This commitment to professional development reflects teachers' dedication to improving their instructional practices and becoming more confident and capable in addressing reading challenges and fostering literacy success among their students.

"I always attend trainings and webinars about reading strategies. I also watch online tutorials and read articles to learn new techniques that I can apply in my class." (P1 and P9)

This finding aligns with Anderson and Clark (2022), who emphasized that continuous professional development and self-directed learning empower teachers to enhance their instructional practices and adapt to students' diverse literacy needs. Their study found that teachers who actively seek new knowledge and strategies through training, collaboration, and independent study demonstrate greater confidence, effectiveness, and innovation in promoting reading comprehension and fluency.

Research affirms the importance of adaptive teaching strategies in overcoming challenges in reading instruction. According to Tomlinson (2017), differentiated and responsive teaching practices enable educators to address diverse student needs and promote equitable literacy outcomes. Likewise, Duke and Cartwright (2021) highlight that effective reading instruction requires continuous reflection and the use of evidence-based approaches to support struggling readers. The experiences shared by teachers in this study reflect a broader need for sustained professional development, resource support, and collaborative learning communities that empower educators to transform instructional challenges into opportunities for reading success.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that while teachers face many challenges in teaching reading comprehension and fluency—such as different reading levels, limited time and resources, and difficulties in motivating students—they consistently show resilience, adaptability, and dedication to improving literacy results. These challenges demonstrate the complex realities of classroom teaching, where teachers must juggle diverse student needs with limited support and heavy workloads.

Despite these obstacles, teachers transform their challenges into opportunities for growth by employing innovative strategies and coping mechanisms. Through differentiated instruction, group reading activities, integration of interactive tasks, and continuous assessment, they create meaningful learning experiences that nurture students' reading skills. Collaboration with colleagues and parents, as well as participation in professional development, further strengthens their instructional practices and confidence as reading facilitators.

Overall, the study emphasizes that the key to reading success involves not only overcoming challenges but also teachers' ongoing pursuit of learning, creativity, and collaboration. Providing teachers with adequate resources, continuous training, and a culture of shared responsibility is crucial for maintaining effective reading instruction and encouraging a lifelong love of reading among students.

The study recognizes its limitations specifically sample size, locale, and the data were based on self-report through online questionnaires. Thus, it is recommended that another study be conducted to include a larger population and more schools.

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